



Notice is hereby given that a **MEETING** of the **COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF GOSPORT** will be held in the **TOWN HALL, GOSPORT** on **WEDNESDAY** the **FIRST DAY** of **APRIL 2009** at **6.00pm** AND **ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO ATTEND TO CONSIDER AND RESOLVE THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS –**

1. To receive apologies from Members for their inability to attend the Meeting.
2. To confirm the Minutes of the Ordinary and Extraordinary Meetings of the Council held on 4 and 23 February and 9 March 2009 (copies herewith).
3. To consider any Mayor's Communications.
4. To receive Deputations in accordance with Standing Order No 3.5 and to answer Public Questions pursuant to Standing Order No 3.6, such questions to be answered orally during a time not exceeding 15 minutes.

(NOTE: Standing Order No 3.5 requires that notice of a Deputation should be received by the Borough Solicitor NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON MONDAY, 30 MARCH 2009 and likewise Standing Order No 3.6 requires that notice of a Public Question should be received by the Borough Solicitor NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON MONDAY, 30 MARCH 2009).

5. Questions (if any) pursuant to Standing Order No 3.4.

(NOTE: Members are reminded that Standing Order No 3.4 requires that Notice of Question pursuant to that Standing Order must be received by the Borough Solicitor NOT LATER THAN 12 O'CLOCK NOON ON TUESDAY, 31 MARCH 2009).

6. To receive the following Part II minutes of the Boards of the Council:
 - Policy and Organisation Board: 11 March 2009
 - Community and Environment Board: 2 March 2009
 - Housing Board: 4 March 2009

7. Overview and Scrutiny Committee (18 March 2009)
 - A) Annual Report on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2008/09 (attached)
 - B) Conference on Loneliness and Isolation amongst the Elderly (attached)

**IAN LYCETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

FIRE PRECAUTIONS

(To be read from the Chair if members of the public are present)

In the event of the fire alarm (single continuous sound) being activated, please leave the Council Chamber and Public Gallery immediately. Proceed downstairs by way of the main stairs or as directed by GBC staff, follow any of the emergency exit signs. People with disability or mobility issues please identify yourself to GBC staff who will assist in your evacuation of the building.

**TOWN HALL
GOSPORT**

24 March 2009

NOTE: (1) MEMBERS ARE REQUESTED TO NOTE THAT IF THE COUNCIL WISHES TO CONTINUE ITS BUSINESS BEYOND 9.30PM THEN THE MAYOR MUST MOVE SUCH A PROPOSITION IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 4.11.18

A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD

WAS HELD ON 11 MARCH 2009

The Mayor (Councillor Kimber) (ex-officio) (P); Councillors Burgess (P), Chegwyn (P), Gill (P), Hicks (P), Hook, Langdon (P), Philpott (P), Mrs Searle (P), Smith (Chairman) (P) and Wright (P).

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, Councillor Beavis had been nominated to replace Councillor Hook for this meeting.

PART II

69. HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY 2009 -2010

Consideration was given to a report of the Housing Services Manager which requested that the Housing Renewal Policy be formally adopted in order to implement changes to the home repair and adaptation system. An addendum report with revised recommendations had previously been circulated to Members.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to:

- a) the Housing Renewal Policy 2009 – 2010;
- b) retention of the sum of £45,000 identified for conversion grants in the Housing Renewal Policy Report;
- c) amendment of the Housing Renewal Policy 2009 – 2010 to reflect the exemption of shop premises in relation to discretionary conversion grants; and
- d) the additional conditions described at 3.4 (a & b) of the addendum report to be included in the Housing Renewal Policy 2009 – 2010 in relation to discretionary conversion grants.

70. GOSPORT SUMMER PASSPORT

The Chairman agreed to receive a presentation on this item this at this meeting notwithstanding the fact that it had not been available for public inspection in accordance with the provisions of Section 100B(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1985.

The special circumstances were that the Board should be aware of activities that would be offered over the forthcoming Easter holidays.

A presentation was made by the Head of Community Safety and the Community Development Officer on the Gosport Summer Passport. The scheme was designed to deliver free, open access activities during school holidays for young people between the ages of 11 and 17 using a strategic multi-agency approach.

Members were impressed by the scheme and were pleased that young people were being given the opportunity to be involved in such activities. It was felt that there were opportunities for the scheme to link into other events in the Borough.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their presentation.

71. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a report of the Financial Services Manager which updated Members on the Medium Term Financial and Capital Strategies.

RESOLVED: That that the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy be approved.

72. NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES – WRITE OFFS

Consideration was given to a report of the Financial Services Manager which advised Members of an outstanding National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) debt in excess of £10,000 which required write-off approval of the Board in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations.

RESOLVED: That a write-off of £27,462.04 in respect of Body Visions Ltd, Unit 5-8 Oaklands, Aerodrome Road, Gosport, PO13 0GY be approved.

73. DAEDALUS VISIONARY FRAMEWORK (SEEDA)

Consideration was given to a report of the Development Services Manager which informed Members of SEEDA's latest proposals for the Daedalus site, as set out in the Daedalus Visionary Framework, and sought agreement on the Council's response to these proposals.

The Development Services Manager advised that the report highlighted concerns regarding retail and residential development. Officers felt that the proposed level of residential development was too high and that there should be no residential development at Manor Way. The East-West Road was worthy of support in principle.

It was agreed that within the eighth recommendation of the report the name 'Solent View' should be 'Ross House'.

Members raised concerns regarding the proposed level of residential development and the resultant transport issues that would arise, bearing in mind that SEEDA had no funds to finance new or improved roads. There were also concerns regarding the effect on shops at Lee-on-the-Solent as a result of the proposed level of retail development on the site.

It was agreed that the fifth recommendation to the report should be amended to provide that any proposals for residential development should accord with the Local Plan allocation or as may be indicated or replaced by the Local Development Framework.

Members felt that a Western Relief Road was vital for Gosport and that access to the Gosport Peninsula should be considered as part of the Daedalus development.

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Councillor Carter was invited to address the Board as Ward Councillor for the area. Councillor Carter held the view that the proposed access road would not be successful and would discourage freight vehicles. Drake Road could be considered as a cycle/pedestrian way and he would support the East-West Road.

Councillor Carter was concerned that there had been no mention of the conservation area or the War Memorial. Officers undertook to investigate and respond to Councillor Carter regarding the War Memorial.

It was agreed that a further recommendation be added to the report to reflect that Gosport Borough Council “welcomes the recognition that part of the site is a conservation area with listed buildings and that assets should be retained and re-used and any development around them should be carefully designed”.

It was suggested that any development should be required to attract employment to the area before further housing.

Concerns were raised that there had been no mention of aviation in the document. Officers advised that the Police and the Maritime Coastguard Agency would require facilities for flying in and out of the area to be maintained. It was therefore agreed that this should be investigated and that the seventh recommendation should be amended to reflect this. It was acknowledged that the airfield was not located in Gosport nor was it in the ownership of SEEDA.

Concerns were raised that, should the Bus Rapid Transit scheme be supported, this would make it difficult to support a Western Relief Road as well. It was therefore agreed that the ninth recommendation should be amended to reflect the view that further work should be carried out to ensure highway and public transport improvements were maximised, including the Western Relief Road.

The importance of the effect of any retail element on the site was raised and the view was expressed that it should not be detrimental to existing retail businesses. It was felt that the Borough should encourage tourism and leisure activities and that Daedalus was a prime site for potential attractions. Live/work units should be encouraged.

The Development Services Manager was thanked for his report.

RESOLVED: That SEEDA be advised that the Borough Council:

- i) welcomes SEEDA’s involvement and work to date to progress proposals at Daedalus, which have the potential to deliver significant regeneration benefits for the Borough;
- ii) will work with SEEDA to produce a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the Gosport part of the site;
- iii) supports the significant level of employment floorspace proposed for the site;
- iv) requires further details of the employment strategy including links to training and education opportunities;

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- v) has significant concerns regarding the level of residential development proposed for the site and that any proposals for residential development should accord with the Local Plan allocation or as may be indicated or replaced by the Local Development Framework;
- vi) will need to consider the nature and scale of any retail proposals within the context of the Lee-on-the-Solent retail centre and the wider Borough;
- vii) requires that marina and aviation options should be fully investigated with the prospective developer as part of the SPD process, including how each option will affect the mix of uses on the Daedalus site;
- viii) supports the principle of an east-west access road through the site, but an access route to the north of Ross House onto Stubbington Lane should be investigated as there is significant concern regarding the proposed access to the south;
- ix) requires further work to ensure highway and public transport improvements are maximised, including the Western Relief Road;
- x) will not support any residential development on the Manor Way field;
- xi) welcomes the recognition that part of the site is a conservation area with listed buildings and that assets should be retained and re-used and any developments around them should be carefully designed; and
- xii) supplements these decisions with comments set out in this report.

74. FAREHAM LDF CORE STRATEGY - PREFERRED OPTIONS – GBC RESPONSE

Consideration was given to a report of the Development Services Manager which asked Members to consider and confirm an interim response to Fareham Borough Council's Local Development Framework (LDF).

Members were advised that principal access to and from the Gosport Peninsula could only be from Fareham and therefore Fareham Borough Council would have to be involved in the preparation of transport solutions to the peninsula's traffic and congestion problems. The impact of the North of Fareham Strategic Development Area Position Statement on Junction 11 of the M27 would be significant. There were fears that, if Hampshire County and Fareham Borough Councils did not make the correct decisions, the opportunity would be lost forever to reduce traffic congestion in and out of Gosport.

Concerns were raised regarding the future of the proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme. Officers advised that it would be inadvisable to dedicate all developer contributions to this scheme and leave nothing for the West Relief Road should it go ahead.

Members stressed the importance of ensuring that any BRT works were phased and were assured that Hampshire County Council had taken this concern on board.

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RESOLVED: That the interim response sent to Fareham Borough Council as set out in Appendix A of the Development Services Manager's report be confirmed.

75. PIER STREET CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Consideration was given to a report of the Development Services Manager which presented the final version of the Pier Street Conservation Area Appraisal following consultation on the draft appraisal. This included the proposed extensions to the boundaries, and suggestions for the re-naming of the Conservation Area.

Councillor Carter, as Ward Councillor, was invited to address the Board. Councillor Carter advised Members that he understood there was a feeling that the area should be re-named 'Lee Central Conservation Area'. He also drew attention to problems with the balustrade at the northern end of Pier Street, which officers undertook to investigate.

Officers advised that there had been no real consensus on the re-naming of the area. It was proposed and agreed that the area should be renamed 'Lee-on-the-Solent Conservation Area'.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the Pier Street Conservation Area Appraisal be approved as a supporting document to inform Development Control decisions and proposals in the Local Development Framework; and
- b) the re-naming of 'Pier Street Conservation Area' to 'Lee-on-the-Solent Conservation Area' be approved.

76. PROVISION OF PETANQUE FACILITY, STOKES BAY

By reason of special circumstances, the Chairman determined that this item be considered at this meeting notwithstanding the fact that it had not been available for public inspection in accordance with the provisions of Section 100B(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1985.

The special circumstances were created due to the need for the facility to be provided by the end of May 2009 in time for the Gosport-Royan 50th Anniversary Twinning events.

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts which sought the approval of the Board to the terms of the lease for the petanque pitches and associated facilities at Stokes Bay.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) approval be given to the terms of the lease for the petanque pitches and associated facilities at Stokes Bay as detailed in the report; and

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- b) the Borough Solicitor be authorised to enter into such documentation as is necessary to effect the above decision in consultation with the Head of Property Services.

The meeting ended at 7.47 p.m.

**A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT BOARD
WAS HELD ON 2 MARCH 2009**

The Mayor (Councillor Kimber); Councillors Beavis, Burgess (P), Chegwyn (Chairman) (P), Edgar (P), Mrs Forder, Langdon (P), Murphy (P), Salter (P), Smith (P) and Wright (P).

It was reported that, in accordance with Standing Orders, notice had been received that Councillors Hook and Mrs Salter would replace Councillors Beavis and Mrs Forder respectively for this meeting.

PART II

65. PROJECT INTEGRA ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2009-2014

Consideration was given to a report of the Environmental Services Manager which examined the targets set by the Project Integra Business Plan for its Partnership Authorities for 2009-2014. The Report included a risk assessment advising that Local Authorities must adopt the Business Plan should they wish to continue with their membership of the partnership and that adoption of the plan would commit the Local Authority to strive to obtain a 40% recycling rate by 2010.

Clarification was given in answer to a Member's question concerning the 'Blue Haze Transfer Station' and the 'processing of incinerator bottom ash'. Members were advised that the Blue Haze Transfer Station was situated in Ringwood and that as the landfill facility there was due to close shortly a review would be undertaken on the future of the Transfer Station. In addition Members were advised that previously unincinerable bottom ash could now be used as part of the construction of new roads and that 100000 tonnes had been used in the recent work on the M27.

Members questioned the targets that the business plan had set, highlighting in particular discrepancies in two figures setting the target for the reduction of waste. It was suggested that this would need to be taken to the Project Integra Board for clarification.

It was highlighted that currently only 19% of waste disposed of was domestic. Members questioned this as currently no service was provided by the Local Authority for the disposal of commercial waste. Concerns were raised as to the intentions of Project Integra and the Local Authority in addressing this large proportion of the waste. Members were advised that a scheme for the collection of waste from commercial properties was currently in its infancy at Eastleigh Borough Council. It was also recognised that there were high costs currently imposed on small to medium sized enterprises for the disposal of their waste and that the situation was currently under investigation.

Members questioned whether provisions were being made to meet the target of

a 40% recycling rate by 2010. They were advised that there were still a number of multi-occupancy properties to come on-line to current waste disposal methods. In addition to this Members were advised that there were a number of issues hindering the process of bringing multi occupancy properties online including the rerouting of collection rounds and the capacity of communal bins. The most significant issue however was the storage of communal bins in existing properties.

Currently work is taking place with residents of the Borough to address contamination issues in households. Visits had been made providing advice and literature in schools and supermarkets.

It was acknowledged that despite efforts made it was unlikely that the 40% recycling target would be reached. It was recognised that existing waste contracts would need to be reviewed to identify potential to improve recycling including kerbside glass and textile recycling. Local Authorities currently recycling glass and textiles were benefiting from increased rates of recycling.

Members suggested that targets should be drawn up by officers to reflect what was realistically possible for the Borough to achieve.

RESOLVED: That the Project Integra Draft Annual Action Plan 2009-2014 be approved.

66. USE OF DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS AT FORTON RECREATION GROUND, GROVE ROAD RECREATION GROUND, LEE – ON – THE –SOLENT RECREATION GROUND, WALPOLE PARK AND PRIVETT PARK

Consideration was given to a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager which sought the Board's approval for the use of Developer Contributions for the provision of a range of improvements to Forton, Grove Road and Lee-on-the-Solent Recreation Grounds, Walpole and Privett Park.

Members welcomed the provision to include extra lighting facilities in these areas as it was hoped these would provide better security and extended access for those using them.

Clarification was sought as to the extent of the range of improvements and whether the finance for the work would come from individual Ward funds or a central funding source. It was confirmed that the only improvements would be to lighting in the areas and that finance would come from a central fund allocated to developing and improving facilities.

Members expressed concern that the plans for the proposed improvements had not been made available prior to the meeting and questioned the specification of the works to be undertaken. The work to be undertaken would be to a standard specification with lights being 35 metres in distance from each other.

Members were advised that consultation had been undertaken with the Community Safety Partnership as to which areas were priorities for improvement. It was noted that funding may be available from an additional source for some areas and, as a result, they had not been included in the plan for improvements. Ward Councillors had also been consulted.

Members expressed concern that the Youth Council had not been consulted in the process of planning the work as it was felt that young people may significantly benefit from the improvements being undertaken. The importance of liaison with the Youth Council was reiterated as it was hoped it would promote ownership and responsibility by young people which could in turn lead to a reduction in vandalism. Thanks were expressed to the Community Safety Officers who had been involved in considerable work with young people throughout the summer and that it was felt that these foundations should be built upon.

Members were pleased to support the work and were keen for it to be promoted to the residents of the Borough.

It was proposed and agreed that the Bridgemary Park (at Cunningham Drive) area be included for improvement in the planned work. It was confirmed that finance was available for this to take place.

RESOLVED: That:

a) The use of £175000 funding for the following projects be approved:

- 1) Forton Recreation Ground - £15000
- 2) Grove Road Recreation Ground - £18000
- 3) Lee – on – the – Solent Recreation Ground £42000
- 4) Walpole Park - £55000
- 5) Privett Park - £45000; and

b) Bridgemary Park (at Cunningham Drive) area be included for similar improvements.

67. PENTANQUE PITCHES AT STOKES BAY

Consideration was given to a report of the Leisure and Cultural Services Manager which sought approval for the construction of Petanque pitches with a small refreshment area, and the use of £20000 in developer contributions to finance the project. It was hoped that the project could be completed in time for the forthcoming twinning celebrations.

The details of the lease for the pitches and the arrangements for running the facility were discussed. Concern was expressed as to whether the Council or the Pebble Beach Café would be responsible for providing Public Liability Insurance for the area and the equipment hired out.

There were a number of questions concerning the hire of the facility to members of the public, whether there would be a time restriction on the hire of the facility and whether the public could use their own equipment. It was hoped that the Pebble Beach Café would be able to manage the facility.

Members questioned whether there would be a financial return for the Council, and it was felt that a percentage of the profits could be negotiated as part of the lease of the facility.

The Head of Legal Services advised that the lease for the new facility would run concurrently with the lease for the existing facility.

Members agreed that the project should go ahead but a request was made for a briefing note from the Director of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts, to include further details of how the Pebble Beach Café would manage the facility and the percentage of the profits to which the Council would be entitled.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) The use of £20000 developer's contribution to construct the facility be approved; and
- b) A briefing note providing details of the management of the facility and lease agreement for the facility be prepared and presented to Group Leaders by the Director of Economic Development, Tourism and the Arts.

68. NOISE MONITORING WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to a report of the Noise Monitoring Working Group following its investigations into the possible requirement for an 'out of hours noise monitoring service'.

Members discussed the existing level of complaints to the Local Authority and it was felt that the Police were usually called by the public when a complaint was made. It was recognised that noise complaints were low priority to the police as there were often large numbers of higher priority calls.

Members expressed their thanks to the Environmental Health Section for their attendance and monitoring of incidents of excessive noise and for the high standard to which these situations were managed.

It was acknowledged that there was no funding available for the implementation of an out of hours service and that to approve the recommendation at this stage would not be an effective use of resources.

Members requested that the situation be re-examined should the need arise.

RESOLVED: That:

- a) The report be noted;
- b) The Noise Monitoring Working Group be thanked for the work they had undertaken; and
- c) The situation be re-examined should the need for an out of hours service become more evident.

69. CYCLE LANES WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to a report of the Cycle Lanes Working Group investigating the improvements that could be made to the cycle lane network in the Borough.

Members expressed thanks to the Working Group for the high quality of its report.

It was recognised that the terrain of the Borough was ideal for cycling and that this should be utilised to its full potential.

It was advised that an agreement had been reached to allow cyclists to use the proposed Bus Rapid Transport route to Fareham, should the scheme progress.

Members agreed that, in line with the recommendation, Gosport Borough Council needed to engage with Hampshire County Council to ensure that ways to fund improvements continued to be explored through the Hampshire Action Team Forum and through the Hampshire County Council Area Director for Transport.

The importance of ensuring existing cycle lane facilities were maintained was reinforced along with a need to examine other schemes to help improve traffic flow issues in Gosport.

It was clarified that in recommendation (f) of the report, 'The Chairman' was a reference to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Cycle Lane working group be approved as follows:

- a) The Council engage with Hampshire County Council (HCC) on the issue of funding for, and promotion of, the cycle lane network in Gosport Borough via the HCC Area Director for Transport and the Hampshire Action Team Forum;

- b) The Council, via the Community and Environment Board, include the 5 schemes set out in Paragraph 4.1.1 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (attached as Appendix A) as priorities for improvements and to request for them to be included in the next Local Transport Plan;
- c) The Council write to the Area Manager of Hampshire Highways regarding the problems with the inspection regime and standards of shrub clearance;
- d) Gosport Transport and Sustainability Partnership (GTSP) continue to lead on promoting cycling and the production of promotional material, maps and secure cycle parking; GBC will support GTSP in this role;
- e) Improvements be made to the website as suggested in the report, consistent with the initiatives of the GTSP; and
- f) The Chairman make arrangements to send copies of the report to the County Director of Environment and the relevant County Council Executive Member.

70. APPLICATIONS FOR EVENTS TO BE HELD ON COUNCIL LAND

By reason of special circumstances, the Chairman determined that this item be considered at this meeting notwithstanding the fact that it had not been available for public inspection in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(4)(a) of the Local Government Act 1985.

The special circumstances were created as many of the events were planned to take place between this Board meeting and the next scheduled meeting on June 15th 2009. Organisers would require confirmation of approval in sufficient time to allow their planning and arrangements to proceed.

Members were presented with a list of applications to hold events on Council land.

The Chairman reinforced that all event applications would come to this Board for approval, including those events to be run by Gosport Borough Council.

It was requested that an application from the organisers of the forthcoming Circus Tent Event, be approved in principle at this meeting pending receipt of the completed application. It was advised that when the completed application was received the relevant information be sent to Group Leaders and that, should any issues arise, then an Extraordinary Community and Environment Board meeting would be called.

RESOLVED: That

a) The following applications to hold events on Council land, with hiring fees and charges (including deposits) being in line with the fees and charges schedule agreed by the Council at its recent budget meeting, be approved.

- 1) BMX Race Day, 15th March, Gosport BMX Club
- 2) Gosport Passport Scheme, 7th April, GBC Community Safety
- 3) Gosport Passport Scheme, 8th April, GBC Community Safety
- 4) Gosport Passport Scheme, 17th April, GBC Community Safety
- 5) St George's Day Parade, 26th April, Gosport District Scouts
- 6) Life Boat and Blue Light Services Day, 4th May, GAFIRS
- 7) Gosport Passport Scheme, 27th May, GBC Community Safety
- 8) Gosport's Big Day Out, 14th June, GBC Economic Prosperity; and

b) An application for forthcoming Circus Tents Events be approved in principle with details of the application forwarded to Group Leaders on receipt.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 7.20 pm

A MEETING OF THE HOUSING BOARD

WAS HELD ON 4 MARCH 2009

The Mayor (Councillor Kimber) (ex-officio), Chairman of Policy and Organisation Board (Councillor Smith)(ex-officio), Councillors Allen, Ms Ballard (P), Beavis (P), Bradley (P), Mrs Cully (P), Edwards (P), Geddes (P), Gill (Chairman) (P), Mrs Mudie and Philpott (P).

Also in attendance: Tenant Representative – Mrs Jan Carter

PART II

45 PARTNERING ARRANGEMENTS FOR GAS SERVICING AND HEATING AND ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

Consideration was given to the report of the Housing Services Manager which sought approval to extend the existing partnering arrangements in place for the delivery of gas servicing and heating and electrical installations.

Concern was expressed that, if the partnering arrangements for heating and installation and electrical works were extended for a further 2 years to 2011, the contract would not have been tested on the open market through a competitive tendering process for 9 years. There was less concern at extending the gas servicing partnering arrangements for a further two years as this would be the first extension option on this contract. However, this arrangement would have been in operation for 7 years by 2011, also without going through a tendering process. It was suggested that the contracts be extended for, possibly, a 6 month period, in order that a formal tendering process could be undertaken for the awarding of partnership contracts for gas servicing and heating and electrical installations.

Members noted that the two contracts would end in April 2009 unless extensions were approved and questioned why a report had not been presented to the Board at an earlier meeting. This would have given time for a tendering process to be undertaken had the Board so desired. Members requested that, in future, reports on contract extension be presented to the Board in sufficient time to enable all alternative options to be considered.

Members were advised that the wish to extend the partnering arrangements was based on the high level of customer satisfaction with the service received and on benchmarking exercises undertaken to ensure value for money.

Members queried whether it would cause operational problems if both partnering arrangements ended at the same time in 2011. Officers advised that it was intended to bring all partnering arrangements in line to end in 2011 so that consideration could be given at that time to awarding a single contract for the provision of all partnering services, thus obtaining the best service and value for money for the Council.

Support was expressed for the high level of service provided by 1st Saxon-Clenmay and for the fact that they were a local firm providing training and jobs for local people.

A motion that the partnering arrangements be extended only until such time as a tendering process had been completed for the awarding of new contracts was proposed and seconded. On being put to the vote the motion was lost on the casting vote of the

Chairman.

RESOLVED: That :-

- 1) approval be given for taking up the 2 year extension option of the current partnering arrangement with 1st Saxon-Clenmay for gas servicing until April 2011;
- 2) approval be given for the extension of the current partnering arrangement for heating installations and electrical works until April 2011 with 1st Saxon-Clenmay;
- 3) contract standing order 1.4.1 in respect of (2) above be waived; and
- 4) reports on contract extensions be presented to Board in sufficient time to enable all alternative options to be considered.

46 HOMELESSNESS GRANTS TO EXTERNAL BODIES 2009/10

Consideration was given to the report of the Housing Services Manager which requested approval of the grants for 2009/10 and informed Members of other related grant bids.

Members were advised that certain figures in Appendix 1 to the report were incorrect. The first paragraph of the third column should read, "Calculated as for 2008-09 with an additional £1,891.63 from homelessness grant and £16,997.68 from existing homelessness budgets". The third column "Total from HRA" should read "£3,081.47". The third column "Total from existing homelessness budgets" should read "£16,997.68". The figures contained in paragraph 1a to the Recommendations and in paragraph 1.3 of the report required similar adjustment.

Members were advised that the additional grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) would enable the current part time debt advisor to work full time. In addition to the provision of debt advice, this would enable the post holder to provide training on debt management to other CAB staff, thus increasing provision of this vital service during the period of economic downturn.

Officers confirmed that the Service Level Agreement with the CAB included monitoring of the service provided to Council tenants and the potentially homeless. Members requested that a report on the services provided be brought to the Board in 12 months' time.

Members fully supported the provision of debt management advice by the CAB and endorsed the importance of looking after Council tenants in difficult economic times.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the following grants/budgets be approved and funded by homelessness grant (unless otherwise stated):
 - a. Gosport Citizens Advice Bureau, debt service: £31,269.15 of which £3,081.47 to be paid from Housing Revenue Account and £16,997.68 from existing homelessness budgets. The remainder from homelessness grant;
 - o The Housing Services Manager, in consultation with the Housing Board Chairman, be given delegated power to agree a Service Level Agreement in respect of this service;
 - b. Accommodation Resource Centre (Mediation and homeless education service) £6,910;
 - c. Domestic Violence Call Centre monitoring budget: £400.00;

- d. Domestic Violence (agent installation/removal budget): £1500.00; and
- 2) a report be brought to the Board in 12 months' time on the services provided under the Service Level Agreement.

47 HOUSING REPAIRS PROGRAMME 2009 - 10

Consideration was given to a report of the Housing Services Manager which set out the proposed 2009 – 2010 Housing Repairs Programme and sought the approval of the Board for that programme.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 2.5 of the report which referred to the Department of Communities and Local Government letter offering local authorities the opportunity to bid for advance funding in 2009-10 which would be deducted from the funds allocation in 2010-11. This would enable work to be carried out to achieve compliance with the Decent Homes Standard, for example, replacement boilers which, in turn, could save on repair and servicing costs.

The Housing Services Manager advised that the deadline for putting in a bid for this advance funding was the previous Friday. However, officers could not put in a bid without first obtaining approval from the Board. Therefore, an expression of interest had been submitted and it was hoped that a substantive bid could be made should Board approval be given.

Members were satisfied that Section 3.0 of the report on Asset Management fully complied with the request made at the January 2009 meeting of the Board that a report on Asset Management be brought to this meeting. As this was not reflected in the report title, it was suggested that, for clarity, it be included in the Resolutions for this item.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) approval be given for the proposed 2009 -10 Housing Repairs Programme and the implications for this Council's Asset Management Strategy;
- 2) approval be given for Officers to make a bid for advance funding via Major Repairs Allowance as per paragraphs 2.5 and 2.6 of the report;
- 3) Officers follow the principles [approved at the Housing Board meeting of March 2005] as detailed below:
 - i. Officers be required to seek Board approval to vary the Housing Repairs Programme where work within an identified element of the approved Housing Repairs Programme cannot take place;
 - ii. where urgent works are identified after (approval of the Housing Repairs Programme) for which there is no identified provision, Officers in consultation with the Chair of the Housing Board be permitted to vary the programme for works up to £60,000;
 - iii. where urgent works are identified (after approval of the Housing Repairs Programme) for which there is no identified provision, Officers in consultation

with the Chair and Group Spokespersons be permitted to vary the programme for works between £60,000 and £100,000;

- iv. Officers be required to seek Board approval to vary the approved Housing Repairs Programme where urgent works are identified (after approval of the programme) for which there is no identified provision and the value of these works exceeds £100,000;
- v. That Officers be required to seek Board approval where work within an identified element of the approved Housing Repairs Programme is going to under or over-spend by more than £100,000;
- vi. Members be informed of significant variations to the Programme as outlined in (i) to (vi) above, which were relevant to their Ward.

48 HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY 2009 - 2010

The Board considered the report of the Housing Services Manager which advised that a formally adopted Housing Renewal Policy was required in order to implement changes to the home repair and adaptation system.

Concerns were raised that shop premises may well be being lost due to the availability of the conversion grant. Officers explained the conversion grant did not apply solely to shop premises. Officers agreed to provide further information to the Policy and Organisation Board on the following matters:

- 1) examples of when the conversion grant had been given;
- 2) whether the money allocated for conversion grants could be allocated to disabled facilities grants; and
- 3) how the wording of the policy could be made more specific where it refers to suitable properties.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) approval be given for the new draft Housing Renewal Policy for 2009 -2010; and
- 2) recommendation be made to the Policy and Organisation Board (Meeting on 11 March 2009) that the Housing Renewal Policy be formally adopted, subject to further information being provided on the discretionary conversion grants as discussed at Housing Board.

49 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman advised Members that the Garage Review was ongoing.

A vote of thanks was made to the Chairman for his guidance during the Municipal Year.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 7.11 pm.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 A

REPORT TO: COUNCIL

DATE OF MEETING: 1 APRIL 2009

REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR FORDER (CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

At its meeting on 18 March 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny considered the item below. Paragraph 6.04 of the Council's Constitution provides that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee must report annually to full Council on their working and make recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2008/09

- a) The Committee completed the following reports:
1. New Councillor Induction – referred to Standards and Governance Board
 2. Cycle Lanes – referred to Community and Environment Board
 3. Noise Monitoring – referred to Community and Environment Board
 4. Services for the Elderly. **Note: this report will be referred to Council**
- b) The following information was received and debated:
1. Performance Information (submitted by Mike Jeffrey)
 2. Community Strategy Action Plan (submitted by Julie Petty)
 3. Disability Equality Scheme (submitted by Julie Petty)
 4. Race Equality Annual Report (submitted by Julie Petty)

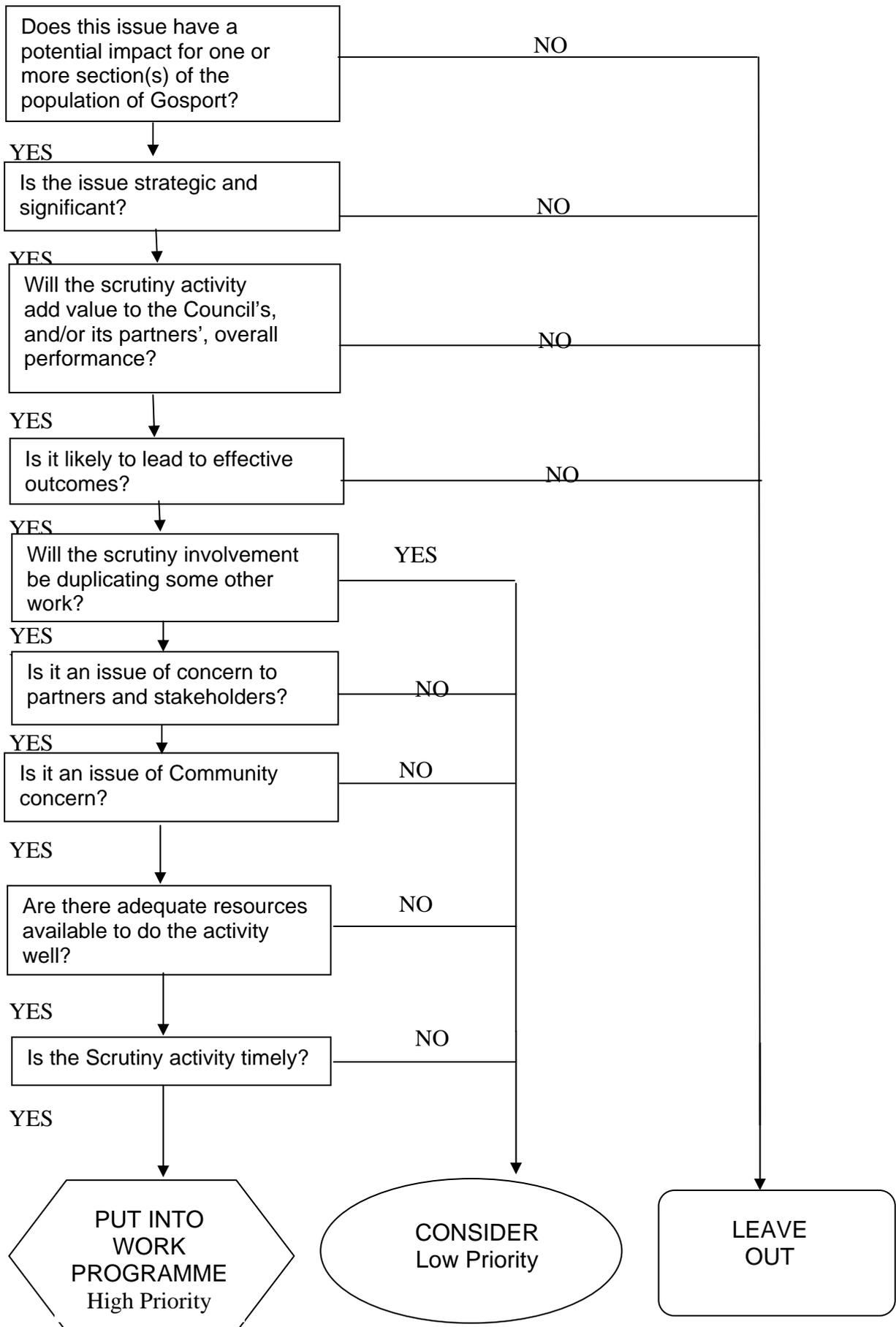
Note: a progress report on the Gosport Community Strategy was submitted to the Committee on 18 March 2009 by the Chief Executive

- c) Two training sessions were organised for all Councillors (including those who were not Committee members):
1. The first dealt with issues concerning the role of the Committee in a Fourth Option Council; what Overview and Scrutiny entails and how success might be achieved. This session was led by Linda Edwards and Ian Lycett.
 2. The second focussed on 'Effective Questioning' and was led by Simon Baddeley of Birmingham University.

Both sessions were well-attended and led to some purposeful debate.

- d) A watching brief was kept with regard to developments concerning the Sustainable Communities Act, 2007 and Calls for Action and Local Petitions (an aspect of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007).
- e) The Committee also committed itself to review the out-turn budget on an annual basis, commencing in July 2009.
- f) The Committee adopted a checklist (as displayed below on a separate page), designed as an aid to the prioritisation of potential scrutinies.

Scrutiny Work Plan Prioritisation Aid



AGENDA ITEM NO. 7 B

REPORT TO: COUNCIL

DATE OF MEETING: 1 APRIL 2009

REPORT BY: COUNCILLOR FORDER (CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

At its meeting on 18 March 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny considered the item below. The Committee recommended that Council consider:

- a) the organising and hosting of a conference on loneliness and isolation amongst the elderly;
- b) the establishment of a Steering Group to consider the organisation and aims of the conference; and
- c) the following nominations to sit on the Steering Group:
 - Councillor Allen
 - Councillor Dickson
 - Councillor Mrs Forder
 - Councillor Forder

Report of the Services for the Elderly Working Group

Membership

Councillors Richard Dickson, Kim West, Inge Forder and Bob Forder

Adviser: Frank Dunn (Age Concern, Gosport)

Officers servicing the Working Group: Chris Wrein and Lisa Reade.

Development of the Scrutiny

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved to establish a Working Group at its meeting of 25 September 2008. Although the precise terms of reference were at first unclear, it was felt that this subject would be important and have a high profile in the near future and that the Council would have a role to play.

The Working Group met on 2 December 2008 having invited Frank Dunn (Age Concern, Gosport). See appendix 1. A conclusion arising from the discussion was that the issues of loneliness and day centre provision were of particular concern and could usefully be focused upon by the Working Group. It was agreed that this issue should be central to the scrutiny. The meeting also agreed that the Chairman should meet with Borough Council officers who had a particular interest in this issue to ascertain their opinion and draw on their experience.

The Chairman, accompanied by Chris Wrein (Democratic Services) met with Sue Kendall

and Carol White (Housing Services) on 18 December 2008. The main points arising from this meeting are recorded in Appendix 2.

Following the meeting of 18 December 2008 Carol White and Mary Burgess (Housing Services) submitted written evidence to the Working Group. See appendices 3 and 4).

Further to a request from the Chairman Lisa Reade (Democratic Services) conducted some research (appendix 5) in which she contrasted relevant provision in Gosport with that evident in Portsmouth and some other nearby local authorities.

On 18 February 2009 the Working Group met with Jean Legg (Gosport Voluntary Action-Co-ordinator, Befriending Service) and Margaret Wilkinson (Hampshire Adult Services). Once these witnesses had left, there was also a discussion about the conclusions which the Working Group could draw and the recommendations it could make. See appendices 6 and 7.

Conclusions

The Working Group decided that it should publish a report at this stage because time would not allow any further enquiries or research before the end of the Council year. However there is undoubtedly more useful work that could be undertaken if the newly convened Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided to in 2009-2010

The Working Group drew the following conclusions:

1. There is much good work being undertaken in Gosport to alleviate loneliness and isolation. For example, Working Group members were particularly impressed by the Befriending Service offered by Gosport Voluntary Action.
2. Nevertheless, there is much evidence to suggest that loneliness and isolation are major and growing problems. There is a widespread suspicion and considerable anecdotal evidence to suggest that the problem is more widespread than is generally recognised.
3. There is no comprehensive systematic data available to accurately assess the extent of the problem.
4. Responses designed to alleviate the problem are inclined to be ad hoc and depend on the enthusiasm and voluntary initiatives of particular individuals.
5. Members of the Working Group felt unable to make very specific recommendations as to how the problem could be addressed because Members lacked expertise. However they did think that there was unlikely to be any single initiative that would answer. Solutions would be best provided by 'chipping away' at the problem and they would probably best be provided by a wide variety of organisations and voluntary bodies.

Recommendation

The Council explore the possibility of organising and hosting a conference on loneliness and isolation among the elderly.

Local churches, scout groups, schools, charities and other voluntary bodies would be invited. The conference would begin with a presentation designed to highlight the problem,

but this could be brief. The majority of the time would be spent with participants working together exchanging information about good practice and generating strategies that could help in addressing the issues and considering ways in which they could contribute to alleviating the problems.

List of appendices:

1. Record of the meeting held on 2 December 2008
2. Record of a meeting held on 18 December 2008
3. Written evidence submitted by Carol White
4. Written evidence submitted by Mary Burgess
5. Record of research undertaken by Lisa Reade
6. Record of the Working Group meeting held on 18 February 2009
7. Information on the Befriending Service offered by Gosport Voluntary Action

APPENDIX 1

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY WORKING GROUP HELD AT 2.00 PM ON 2 DECEMBER 2008

Membership: Councillors Dickson (P), Mrs Forder (P) , Forder (P) and Miss West

Officers: Chris Wrein

Also in attendance: Frank Dunn (Age Concern)

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 At its meeting on 25 September 2008, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided to establish a Working Group to scrutinise the provision of services for the elderly in Gosport.
- 1.2 It had been felt that this subject would be important and high profile in the near future and that the Council would have a role to play. Currently, information was dispersed and many people did not take up benefits or services to which they were entitled.
- 1.3 It was hoped that the outcome of the scrutiny would be a report identifying areas of need and appropriate recommendations designed to help alleviate them.

2.0 DISCUSSION AT THE MEETING

- 2.1 Frank Dunn provided the Working Group with an overview of the work of Age Concern (Gosport) which provided an information and advice centre at the Methodist Church in Stoke Road on a daily basis. They provided help to elderly people wherever possible and at one time had assisted with house moves. However, resources were limited and they were dependent on volunteers which restricted the assistance that could be given.
- 2.2 Income was generated by grants from the Borough and County Councils and through fund raising e.g. flag days
- 2.3 Age Concern (Portsmouth) differed in that it ran two day centres and employed paid officers with money provided by Portsmouth City Council. There was a good overlap of work between the two Age Concern organisations.
- 2.4 Mr Dunn listed areas where Age Concern offered assistance:

- Recommendation of tradespeople and solicitors
 - Form filling
 - Advice on facilities available in the Borough e.g. nursing homes
 - Advice on where to access services/practical assistance
 - Insurance enquiries (these are directed to Age Concern (Portsmouth))
 - Advice on sheltered accommodation and housing/re-housing
 - Limited financial advice
 - Some benefit advice (the Council provides help, including home visits)
 - Lending out of books and will packs
 - Pensions advice
- 2.5 Age Concern (Gosport) had a good relationship with Gosport Borough Council and the Citizens' Advice Bureau from whom it received referrals from time to time.
- 2.6 Mr Dunn gave examples of where Age Concern (Gosport) were unable to provide practical help, although it was acknowledged that Gosport Voluntary Action (GVA) were often able to provide a service:
- gardening
 - befriending service (loneliness amongst elderly people was a common problem)
 - queries on access nursing home services
 - abuse of the elderly (cases would be referred to Social Services)
- 2.7 With regard to nursing homes, Age Concern (Gosport) knew a great deal about the varying standards of provision in Gosport but there were not enough bed spaces with a number of establishments having closed due to e.g. lack of lifts.
- 2.8 Mr Dunn identified Margaret Wilkinson, the manager of the Carers' Centre, who would be able to provide a great deal of information.
- 2.9 Age Concern (Gosport) were known by all the GP surgeries in Gosport and it was felt that this may be an area which could be expanded on.
- 2.10 Mr Dunn advised that all people who attended day centres were required to be referred by Social Services. This provided a much needed day out for some service users and also some respite for carers. Service users were becoming more and more numerous and some of them were mentally frail. The inadequacy of day centre provision was one of the most serious issues in Gosport.
- 2.11 Councillor Dickson observed that many of the current elderly generation valued their pride and independence and were reluctant to seek help, a problem which was exacerbated where a person lived alone. They were also often reluctant to become involved with paperwork, had an

aversion to jargon and liked to keep to their own daily routines. Newly retired people may be the best people to be encouraged to provide help but Mr Dunn advised that it was becoming ever harder to recruit volunteers.

2.12 Mr Dunn advised that, nationally, Age Concern and Help the Aged would be merging. The process would probably take a couple of years.

2.13 It was felt that the areas for the Working Group to focus on should be:

- awareness of entitlement benefits
- loneliness and a possible lack of adequate day centres
- adequacy of nursing home provision

2.14 It was agreed that the Chairman speak with Sue Kendall, the Council's Older Persons' Services Co-ordinator (Housing Services) prior to the Working Group inviting Margaret Wilkinson to meet them.

APPENDIX 2

Record of the main points arising from a meeting held at Gosport Town Hall on Thursday 18 December attended by Sue Kendall, Carol White, Chris Wrein and Bob Forder.

Background

The meeting was held as the result of a decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Working Group on Services for the Elderly held on 2 December. The Chairman had been asked to hold a meeting with Sue Kendall (GBC) to explore which of the issues identified by the Working Group could be profitably pursued and what work had already been carried out by GBC. In the event it was thought appropriate to invite Carol White to the meeting too.

Sue and Carol both strongly felt that the Working Group could have most impact if it were to consider the issue of loneliness and day centre provision. Their opinion was supported by various evidence, including their own research.

Bob explained that in his view the Working Group's Report would have to contain the following:

- i) Evidence that there was a unfulfilled need,
- ii) Examples of how provision could be improved,
- iii) Recommendations as to how such an improvement could be achieved.

With respect to the first of these Sue and Carol both agreed to write brief reports summarising their evidence that there was a need.

Chris would begin to arrange a questioning session for the Working Group to which Margaret Wilkinson (Adult Services) and Jean Legg (GVA) would be invited.

Lisa (Democratic Services) could investigate Portsmouth City Council's Day Centre provision which was thought to be of a good standard if Linda Edwards considered this appropriate.

Action points:

- Sue Kendall and Carol White to write brief reports as explained above.
- Chris Wrein to set up Working Group meeting in early to mid February to which Margaret Wilkinson and Jean Legg will be invited.
- Lisa to undertake research as above.

Evidence based report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Working Group.

I have been working on the Telecare project since January 2008. In that time I have carried out over 120 assessments to residents in Gosport. There has been the same pattern forming for individuals who are at home and alone with no family, friends or neighbours.

They suffer largely from loneliness; mostly due to not being very mobile, or have a disability in some way. Some of these people do not belong to clubs, they have no contact with anyone and have no idea what they may or may not be entitled to. Transport is also a strong consideration as they cannot in most cases get out and about.

1. Telecare has helped to offer security and assistance when they live on their own. If they were to fall or become ill they would be able to summon help.
 - We have been able to signpost people to help that they had no knowledge of, such as: The Pension Service, The Befriending Service, DART, Gosport Voluntary Services, and Carer's Centre etc. Information has also been given where appropriate for our sheltered schemes.
 - Currently we have 180 Telecare customers. 175 are over the age of 65. We have 30 clients who we respond to as they have no family living locally.
 - Total population aged 65-74 predicted to live alone in Gosport is 1,765 in 2008. This is predicted to rise to: 2,315 by 2015.
 - Total population aged 75 and over predicted to live alone in Gosport are: 3,147 in 2008 and is predicted to rise to: 3,638 by 2015.
 - There are 13,293 over 65's living in Gosport (2007 statistics provided by HCC), this has risen to 13,800 in 2008.
2. There is a way forward: Help could be at hand for those who is either on the telecare project or who in future may become clients of the Supporting People Lifeline service managed by the operational team in Housing. A phone call or a weekly visit would be all it takes. Staff could be trained in what other services are available and can signpost and offer advice where appropriate.
3. Recommendations:
 - Weekly visits or phone calls

- Transport to clubs and associations
- Youth activities to assist older people in the community
- Mobile library or reading scheme
- Day centre provision
- Gentle exercise classes
- Coffee mornings sessions – people alone live near each other and could be encourage to visit each other – they just need that first introduction.
- Gardening assistance

Carol White, Project Officer (Private Sector), Strategy & Enabling, Housing Services

APPENDIX 4

GAPS IN PROVISION OF SERVICES TO THE ELDERLY IN GOSPORT

To: Chris Wrein

For Information

The following information is based on 9 years service with Gosport Borough Council sheltered housing service, the last two years as Senior Scheme Manager.

During this time, the service has become involved in carrying out Needs and Risk Assessments for those older people who are interested in coming into sheltered housing, and more recently on behalf of Telecare, where the person stays in their own home and support is provided via a dispersed unit in their home.

Although as a service we are unable to provide evidence to back up the following report, the information contained within it is based on experience and knowledge of the age group concerned.

Isolation and loneliness is becoming more of an issue for older people; there are many reasons for this and based on responses on our assessment forms, they include:

- Families and friends moving away from home (Gosport)
- People now tend to live longer, and may have fewer friends as they age.
- Health issues can cause older people to become isolated (fear and embarrassment).
- Mobility issues may be a problem for some, due to not being able to get out or to access public transport easily.

Carrying out Needs and Risk Assessments (NARA) has enabled us to identify people's needs for sheltered accommodation, and to highlight the support they require.

Since the introduction of the home assessments 173 people have expressed an interest in sheltered housing, a breakdown of the figures shows that:

- 15% want to move to Gosport to be nearer families for support.
- 20% feel their homes/gardens are too big and cannot manage them anymore.
- 50% feel isolated and lonely
- 15% for other reasons

Case Study 1

Mrs A lived in a one bedroom bungalow, however due to her feeling isolated and lonely she became depressed and as a result attended the memory clinic in Gosport. Through their recommendation it was thought that sheltered might be an option for her to look into. Since moving into sheltered Mrs A has now managed to establish a good net work of friends and no longer needs to attend the memory clinic anymore for her depression.

Case Study 2

Mr B lived in a 3 bedroom house; he could not maintain his large home anymore and due to ill health could not get out to meet people and as a result became isolated and lonely. This was identified through the NARA interview process. He has since transferred into sheltered housing and says that it is the best thing he has done for a long time.

Sheltered housing is not a 'cure-all' or suitable for everyone, however, these two case studies have identified that in some cases, lonely and isolated older people can benefit from moving into sheltered accommodation.

The use of sheltered housing communal areas as a 'hub' for the older people living in close vicinity to a scheme is one that needs to be developed. There is resistance from residents living at the schemes having the communal areas made available to the wider community and there are security issues surrounding this which would need to be addressed, however, in order to alleviate some of the isolation, options for use could include:

- Learning in later life courses (Fareham college used to offer this service even in sheltered schemes, but due to funding issues were stopped. They included pottery making, Alexander techniques, glass painting, crafts including card making)
- Coffee Mornings in the community. (As most of our Schemes are surrounded by an older population, The Communal Lounge in each area could be used as a focal point)
- Making our Communal Lounges available to other Agencies i.e. Memory Clinic provides relaxation, anxiety classes etc. The Pension Service: - what older people are entitled to.
- Sometimes older people have difficulty in being able to facilitate what little resources are available to them, if they had weekly contact with a Scheme Manager this could alleviate some of the isolation and loneliness issues they feel, and at the same time staff would be able to signpost them to other agencies that may be able to help them.

It must be remembered that some older people are happy and indeed prefer to be on their own, and feel the need to live an independent lifestyle, however this does mean that not only are they isolated, but also suffer from loneliness. This could be addressed by GBC providing a service for the elderly of welfare visits in their own homes.

Below is a list of services available to older people, this is not a comprehensive list and has been compiled with the assistance of local

providers. As you can see, bearing in mind that statistically the older population in Gosport is increasing, there would appear to be few choices for older people to combat isolation. Day centres organised and run by Adult services have not been included in this report.

The author of this report is also aware that there is a percentage of older people who are fit & active (mentally and physically) and who would want more from a Day Centre (sometimes seen as boring and too controlled) and for there to be access to alternative sources of social activity.

Service	By whom	How often
Lunch Club	The Salvation Army	Weekly
Coffee Morning	The Salvation Army	Weekly
Lunch Club	Baptist Church Stoke Rd	Monthly
Dial a ride (to take people Places)	Has to be arranged by the person needing transport	Daily
GVA (befriending, dust busters, shopping service)	GVA	Waiting list for this service and is done once a week for shopping and cleaning. Befriending even less.
Coffee Mornings	Jacobs Well	Weekly
Lunch club	Jacobs Well	Monthly
Older People	Melrose	Monthly
Older People Club	Brendon care	Mon – Thurs Weekly

Author of report: Mary Burgess, Senior Scheme Manager

Date: 27th January 2009

APPENDIX 5

Day Service Provision for the Elderly

1.0 Day Service Provision for the Elderly in Portsmouth

- 1.1 Portsmouth City Council provides a single full day care service for the elderly in Portsmouth, centred on those with dementia and high dependency needs.
- 1.2 The Royal Albert Centre, Buckland Court, provides a service from 8am-4pm including full personal care, meals, hairdressing and beauty salon, foot care, computer and Internet access, arts and crafts, cookery, exercise and well-being groups.
- 1.3 It also provides visits to places of interest, entertainers and guest speakers.
- 1.4 In order for residents of Portsmouth to use the service they must be assessed and referred by the Adult Services Team. They undertake an assessment of individual needs to establish if a place at the Centre is needed.
- 1.5 It would seem that Portsmouth City Council are also considering the proposal of an additional Day Care Service provision for the elderly be provided in the north of the City although no mention is made as to which section of the elderly it will focus on.
- 1.6 If an elderly person were to contact PCC as an individual suffering from loneliness or seeking friendship they would be offered two booklets 'Lunch and Friendship Clubs- Portsmouth Area' and 'Activities at Community Centres'.
- 1.7 The latter provides details of activities that are run by/held at community centres and includes both elderly specific and generic social activities.
- 1.8 The 'Lunch and Friendship Clubs' booklet provides details of a vast array of clubs mainly centred on lunchtimes. The clubs are run by a number of different providers including the Civil Service, Age Concern and the Salvation Army.
- 1.9 In addition to this it also lists 7 clubs run by Social Services in partnership with the City Council; these clubs are centred on the areas of Paulsgrove and Buckland, providing a variety of services including lunches, trips out, guest speakers, the opportunity to socialise amongst

others. Some of the sessions are facilitated by a paid worker who supports the planning of a programme agreed by all members.

2.0 What is available in other areas?

- 2.1 On investigating the neighbouring Boroughs of Fareham and Havant it would appear that they too are aware of the issues in facilitating activities for the elderly. Both Local Authorities have run similar working groups to the Services to the Elderly Working Group at Gosport Borough Council although they appear to cover a wider spectrum of needs identified by the elderly members of the group. The culminations of the findings in each group are presented in the form of an action plan for development areas in the future.
- 2.2 Neither Fareham nor Havant Borough Council run day care sessions for the elderly, they identify the need to link up with local voluntary groups and publicise the work they do and opportunities they provide.
- 2.3 They do however publicise their own non elderly specific schemes e.g. walk to health as an example of activities available.
- 2.4 Havant Borough Council offers elderly residents the chance to attend the 50+ forum, providing them with the opportunity to express their views, concerns and opinions of what is important to them. This has resulted in a direct influence on various proposed projects.
- 2.5 Fareham Borough Council and Portsmouth City Council have also produced 'Strategy for Older People' Documents that document their findings and proposals for the future.

3.0 What is currently available in Gosport?

- 3.1 There are currently nine friendship/lunch clubs in Gosport run by Brendoncare.
- 3.2 Brendoncare is a company that facilitate clubs for the elderly in Hampshire and Dorset. The clubs are run by volunteers and aim to promote wellbeing and the opportunity to meet new people.
- 3.3 The support from the volunteers ensures that the costs can be kept low to the members; in addition they have a commitment to providing free transport when needed.
- 3.4 All the clubs in Gosport are held at Club Hampshire in Gosport with the exception of Lee-on the-Solent.

Lisa Reade, Democratic Services

APPENDIX 6

NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SERVICES FOR THE ELDERLY WORKING GROUP HELD AT 2.00PM ON 18 FEBRUARY 2009

Membership: Councillors Dickson (P), Mrs Forder (P), Forder (P) and Miss West

Officers: Lisa Reade

Also in attendance: Frank Dunn (Age Concern)

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This was the second meeting of the Services for the Elderly Working Group. Members agreed that as the Municipal Year was drawing to a close it was important to tie up the work of the group in order that a report could be written and presented at the final Overview and Scrutiny meeting of the year.
- 1.2 Members accepted that there were likely to be some loose ends, but that there was a possibility of re-examining the issue in the next Municipal Year.
- 1.3 Since the last meeting Councillor Forder had met with Sue Kendall and Carol White who had produced reports with examples of loneliness that they had encountered in their daily work.
- 1.4 There had also been research into the type of provisions made by surrounding Local Authorities.
- 1.5 The group invited Margaret Wilkinson of the Carers Centre, Adult Services, Hampshire County Council and Jean Legg, Befriender Coordinator at Gosport Voluntary Action to a joint questioning session.
- 1.6 The purpose of this questioning session was to further explore existing provisions in Gosport designed to combat loneliness and isolation amongst the elderly and explore the potential for improvement.

2.0 Discussion at the meeting

- 2.1 It was suggested that the idea of a conference be explored with

Margaret and Jean. The purpose of the conference would be to invite representatives from groups that could help provide some of the volunteers and facilities needed to support the work already being undertaken by existing groups such as GVA.

- 2.2 Possible links included Schools, Churches and other voluntary groups.
- 2.3 The group acknowledged that there were already some facilities available, including the Befriending Service but that one of the key issues was that there were many people suffering from loneliness who remained undiscovered.
- 2.4 Mr Dunn felt that one of the priorities was to establish ways of identifying these people. He explained that some G.P's surgeries were helpful in referring patients to organisations but that others were less proactive.
- 2.5 The group recognised that many of the people who would benefit most from the services were those who were unable to, or felt they could not leave their homes so would not benefit from the promotion of services in existing facilities.
- 2.6 As a result the group explored the possibility of including a 'Guide to Services for the Elderly' in publications including Coastline, Lee Advertiser and Free Ads as distribution was guaranteed to all houses in the Borough. The article would be elderly specific and include details of benefits available, Travel Tokens and the Befriending Services.
- 2.7 Members enquired as to whether existing organisations encountered difficulties with elderly people who were old and lonely being stubborn or feeling that they were causing a fuss and not wanting to worry people. Members also queried whether there were difficulties with elderly people feeling too proud to ask for help as they perceived it to be a sign of weakness.
- 2.8 Mr Dunn explained that many elderly people no longer fell into this category and that it was a generational issue that was gradually passing. He acknowledged that the problem still existed but that it was not the main obstacle in reaching those in need.
- 2.9 The Group explored the idea of inviting external organisations to a conference style event and how the organisations could help address the issues. Activities suggested were:
 - Familiarisation for attendees of the issues of loneliness surrounding the elderly;
 - Group sessions discussing how the external organisations themselves felt they could help; and

- Exploring what the organisations could provide to support existing and newly developed projects.
- 2.10 The group examined the benefits of inviting Churches and Schools to the event. It was hoped that the schools could encourage sixth-formers to contribute their time voluntarily to support their own projects as part of their Citizenship Education and for other community based projects e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award.
- 2.11 It was also hoped that Churches would be able to help by providing not only volunteers but facilities in which to coordinate projects.
- 2.12 Mr Dunn advised that he had recently been in discussion with St Mary's Parish Church, Alverstoke as they were exploring the idea of setting up a 'buddy' service for the elderly. He explained that they were very keen and had contacted Age Concern for advice. The group felt that this would be an extremely useful service as St Mary's Church benefited from the use of a good facility whose Parish covered a large area of Gosport.
- 2.13 The group felt that, to ensure any recommendation was productive, they must make the aims simple. They were aware that they could not completely solve the issues surrounding loneliness for the elderly as there was no definitive answer, however the group felt the best way forward would be to help support the existing facilities and promote the issues to others in the hope that more facilities would become available.
- 2.14 The group discussed barriers to the elderly getting out and about. Councillor Dickson advised that he often transported a large number of elderly people by taxi as they were unable to use buses as a result of mobility problems.
- 2.15 He also reported that recent legislation had meant that existing taxis were gradually being replaced by London style cabs, and that although this meant that they would all be accessible to wheelchair users, they would isolate the elderly with mobility problems.
- 2.16 The Group suggested that taxis might be another potential distribution point for advisory leaflets.
- 2.17 The conclusion of the first section of the meeting was that the group could not completely solve the problems facing them; the group would discuss the idea of a conference with the guests and investigate what support they would like to receive from the Working Group.
- 2.18 Councillor Forder would look at the possibility of organising a conference; he would discuss with the Chief Executive or Borough Solicitor the possibility of the resource of an Officer to facilitate the event.

3.0 Questioning Session with Margaret Wilkinson and Jean Legg

- 3.1 Margaret and Jean were advised of the background to the Working Group, and where the group felt it was presently at. The questions were presented in an informal way, with other Members invited to expand if they felt the need.
- 3.2 Jean explained that she worked 15 hours a week as a befriending coordinator for the GVA. Her duties included visiting clients and matching clients to volunteers.
- 3.3 Margaret worked for Hampshire County Council, working with carers of vulnerable people; her work covered any aspect of supporting unpaid carers. In addition she was also the Chair of Trustees for Gosport Voluntary Action.
- 3.4 There were no immediate funding issues to the services supplied by the GVA. They were fortunate enough to receive National Lottery funding which would continue for the next four years. This security meant that they could look at the potential for expansion and prepare fully for future funding applications.
- 3.5 It was a restriction of the Lottery that the money awarded must be used for the designated projects and also that Jean could not be paid for more than 15 hours work per week. Margaret advised the group that Jean did in fact work many more hours on top of those she was paid for.
- 3.6 The Befriending Service received referrals from a number of sources, including Hospitals, General Practitioners and Age Concern, a home visit was then made by Jean to assess the needs of the Client. The volunteers undertook an induction interview, they underwent police and reference checks, and Jean would then introduce the volunteer to the Client and maintain contact with both.
- 3.7 Any volunteer would undertake first aid and listening skills training, and be entitled to attend any other training offered by the GVA. An annual appraisal took place for every volunteer and neither volunteer nor client had to continue if they felt uncomfortable with the person they were with.
- 3.8 Jean advised the group that the majority of clients were initially wary when the process began. As a relationship developed between the Client and volunteer, the client would become more responsive not only to the volunteer, but the outside world. It was also noted that often the people who were self-referrals became volunteers rather than clients.

- 3.9 The service provided signposts to improve the social lives of the clients, but similarly to Mr Dunn, Jean expressed concern for those people that were potential clients and the difficulty reaching them.
- 3.10 The service often received self referrals from the recently bereaved and in particular bereaved carers. The group was advised that the carers of people with dementia were particularly vulnerable as often friends and families' offers of help diminished as the illness progressed. This was in part due to the carer's embarrassment surrounding the dementia sufferer and their illness, this led to them becoming withdrawn. When the bereavement occurred the carer no longer had a focus and often turned to the befriending service for support. It was often these people who become volunteers.
- 3.11 The Working group were advised that in Gosport there were the following provisions available:
- Befriending for the visually impaired
 - Alverstoke Church
 - LV Care Group in Lee-on-the-Solent.
 - Salvation Army
 - Brendon Care
 - Homeserve
 - Dial a ride
 -
- 3.12 In addition, as a result of the Older Persons Well Being Strategy, there were a number of County run schemes including Social Clubs and Opal Project.
- The Opal Project was a new scheme run by Age Concern in conjunction with Hampshire County Council Older People's Well-Being Team and Hampshire Voluntary Groups Advisory Service. A leaflet had been produced for the elderly advising that OPAL could help provide links to social events, support and care amongst other things. The group was particularly impressed with this publication and was keen to see the project in Gosport.
- 3.13 Jean advised the Working Group that the Befriending scheme was very effective in Gosport and that she could not advise on other schemes as a number of them were yet to be launched.
- 3.14 The need for more volunteers was also noted and that there was a list of clients waiting for volunteers.
- 3.15 Jean advised that the waiting list was prioritised to ensure those in most need were allocated first and that often a client would have a telephone befriender whilst waiting for a visiting volunteer to be allocated.

- 3.16 The Working group presented the idea of a conference to Margaret and Jean. The group discussed ideas that could be developed from it and the benefits/issues that it could bring.
- 3.17 The group explored the possibility of a link with 6th Forms, positives of this would include the enjoyment elderly people often experienced from the company of younger people, and the fact that the young people would benefit as any time they gave would help towards any community projects they may be undertaking and provide work experience for those hoping to choose care work as their career. It was hoped that it would also promote the service to the wider community through word of mouth.
- 3.18 There was concern as to the need for Criminal Record Bureau Checks for any individual volunteering; a possible solution was that the young people could start attending along with existing volunteers in the capacity of a helper e.g. a wheelchair pusher on a trip out. This could help many of the existing volunteers who were unable, due to their own problems, to undertake such tasks and may lead to the young person becoming a volunteer in their own right. As the young person would not be undertaking the visits on their own a CRB would not immediately be required.
- 3.19 It was hoped that a conference or similar would enable representatives to attend and develop an understanding of some of the issues and return to their organisation and enthuse the people they worked with.
- 3.20 Everybody present was aware to the fact they did not want to increase the workload of the Befriending Service but were keen to find ways to increase effectiveness.
- 3.21 It was felt that, in order for the event to be successful, representatives from schools, churches and other voluntary groups should be invited and that it must not overlap with the topics covered at the recent networking event
- 3.22 It was hoped that the event would not only promote the issues that needed addressing and recruit volunteers, but also advise potential volunteers of the benefits to themselves and their community. It was hoped that the event would help promote issues to the wider community to enable those currently not receiving help to be aware of what was available for them.
- 3.23 Margaret and Jean advised the group that, apart from additional funding, they would like the Councillors to use their positions to talk to members of their individual wards about the services available as they were most likely to encounter individual members of the public. It was also hoped that this word of mouth would help promote awareness

and encourage neighbours to look out for each other.

- 3.24 They were very keen on providing a document through the post to elderly residents, either as a supplement with Coastline or when issuing bus token leaflets.
- 3.25 The group was advised that the issue was currently a priority of the Government and that initiatives such as OPAL were a result of the Older Person's Wellbeing Strategy. GVA was also linked to the NHS, but found that levels of support for the scheme were varying from practice to practice.
- 3.26 There were good links with the families of clients as often they were the referrers and attended the first visit from the volunteer; this support was also useful in establishing trust. There were also projects being explored that would support the whole family rather than a just an individual member. An Alzheimer's Café was currently being established in Bridgemary to provide Educational and Social Support.
- 3.27 Margaret and Jean both felt that the issues could not be resolved, merely chipped away at to ensure the services that were in existence were as effective and well supported as possible.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 In summary the group felt that it may be beneficial to start by targeting specific smaller groups with the information already available. This could include an individual street or individual sheltered housing scheme. It was hoped that the success of this could then be evaluated for further use in other locations.
- 4.2 The group debated whether a conference was appropriate for the aims they had and whether it was the best option for progression. The importance of not increasing the workload of the GVA was again reiterated.
- 4.3 It was suggested that an initial recommendation would be hard to achieve without doing so and that as the issues would still be present next year, the option for the working group to be re-established could be explored.
- 4.4 The idea of a meeting with external organisations was still welcomed, with the inclusion of a workshop to explore ways forward. A summary report would be produced and Councillor Forder would investigate whether an Officer could be made available to facilitate such event.

Agenda item no. 8

Board/Committee:	Full Council
Date of Meeting:	1st April 2009
Title:	Revised Council Dwelling Rents 2009/2010
Author:	Financial Services Manager and Housing Services Manager
Status:	For Approval

Purpose

This report considers the implications of responding to the amending determination consultation on the Housing Revenue Account subsidy determination 2009 -10 issued on 26th March 2009.

Recommendations

Full Council is requested to approve:

- (a) The average weekly Council dwelling rents increase by 3.1% with effect from 1st April 2009.
- (b) Officers respond to the DCLG consultation by 10am on 24th April 2009 indicating this Councils intention to reduce the rental increase for its tenants down to 3.1% (from the original approved increase of 6.8%) from the 1st April 2009.
- (c) That if, subsequently, the actual Housing Revenue Account determination is unfavourable for this authority, that the Full Council accepts that rents will need to be increased in order to maintain the sustainability of the Housing Revenue Account.

1.0 Background

1.1 On 4th February 2009, Full Council approved the following increases with effect from 6th April 2009:

- (a) The average weekly Council dwelling rents to increase by 6.8%
- (b) Garage, carports and parking lot rents to increase by 5.00%.

1.2 The report explained that it was anticipated that Housing Revenue Account (HRA) balance levels would reduce to approximately £418,000 from the balance of £677,000 by the end of the financial year 2008/2009. This was significantly below the minimum balance identified within the Medium Term Financial Strategy and meant that there was a high risk of the HRA going into deficit if the proposed rent increase of 6.8% was not approved.

- 1.3 Based on the recommended 6.8% average rent increase it was anticipated that the HRA balance would increase to £479,000 by the end of 2009/2010. This slight increase in reserves was dependent upon several factors, including a small increase in service charges to reflect the actual costs concerned and averaging approximately £0.52 per property per week.
- 1.4 The report went on to explain about the increase in subsidy payable to the Government because this Council's rent is far less than the level the Government considers appropriate in order to meet rent restructuring. It was explained in the report that the Council would pay the Government £3.52M in subsidy during 2009/2010, which equated to 34 pence in every £1 collected.
- 1.5 The report clarified that this Council had applied property specific Rent Restructuring from 2003/2004 and using the Government's prescribed formula it was calculated that an average increase of 6.8% is required for 2009/2010.
- 1.6 In addition to ensuring the gap between guideline and actual rents does not widen any further, the proposed increase was required to offset the loss in subsidy and to ensure a working balance was not so low, as to pose a significant risk of an HRA deficit at the end of 2009/2010.

2.0 Other Properties

- 2.1 There are a small number of other properties where the rent levels are assessed in line with HRA properties. The proposal was also increase these by 6.8%.

3.0 Current Proposals

- 3.1 Since the Full Council meeting on 4th February 2009 there has been a significant change in circumstances following the Housing Ministers announcement on Friday 6th March 2009. A letter was sent by the DCLG on 11th March 2009 with the intention of providing Councils with an indication of how the new guideline rent increase for 2009 -10 would be implemented and how it would be treated in the subsidy system. This was followed by the issue of the HRA amending determination consultation paper which was received on 26th March 2009.

The paper states:

“Rent Guidelines 2009 -10

The original average increase in guideline rent published for December 2009 -10 was 6.2%. This comprised a general increase in guideline for all councils and an element due to convergence to formula rents. The new guideline rent increase for 2009 -10 is 3.1%. This has been calculated by changing only the element of general increase in guideline rents originally proposed. It is intended that those councils that accept our offer and reduce their actual rent increases will be compensated on the following basis:-

If the Council's 2009-10 average actual rent increase is less than or equal to the lower of 3.1% of:-

- *average guideline rent in 2008-09; or*
- *actual average rent in 2008-09*

then we will give each council the increase in subsidy that a change in the national average guideline increase of 3.1% would result in for that council.

Consultation

We appreciate that most councils will by now have decided on rent increases for 2009 -10 and will have sent out rent notices, and that the Department's proposed timetable is critical for you to be able to plan next steps.

The Department published a draft amending determination for a brief period of consultation on these arrangements which concludes at 10am on 24th April 2009. It includes details of new individual guideline rent increases for each local authority based on a national average of 3.1%, in the week beginning 23 March 2009. The draft amending determination also includes for comparison the original individual guideline rent increases for each council based on a national average guideline rent increase of 6.2%".

4.0 Impact of the proposals on the HRA

4.1 The impact on the HRA of implementing the reduced rent increase is a loss in revenue of approximately £340,000. Using the current consultation determination this would be partially offset by a reduction in subsidy payable of approximately £320,000. This indicates a net loss to the HRA of £20,000. The DCLG has indicated that it expects authorities will have the resources necessary to cover additional costs that fall upon the HRA. The DCLG also refer to additional one-off costs that fall on the General Fund with particular regard to the administration of housing benefit arising from the proposed changes. DCLG have asked for an indication of such costs with the potential to reimburse authorities where they consider this to be an unreasonable additional burden. All other sections of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy Determination 2009 -10 will remain as set by the DCLG in December 2008.

4.2 It is expected that the DCLG will issue the final amending determination in May 2009 (after the close of the consultation period).

5.0 Risk Assessment

5.1 The major risk to this Council is the DCLG issuing an unfavourable subsidy determination after the consultation period ends, resulting in an unexpected further loss to the HRA. If this were the case then rents would need to be increased to ensure that the HRA is sustainable and that this Council is able to retain its stock.

5.2 Following discussions today with the DCLG, assurances have been given that

provided the average rent levels of 3.1% become effective on 1st April 2009 then the subsidy determination will follow that decrease. It is therefore considered that the risk is low.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 The change of position by the DCLG will be a welcome relief for this Council's tenants, especially in this difficult financial climate. The late notification by DCLG will mean substantial additional workload for both Housing Services and Housing Benefits during the month of April.

Financial Implications:	As set out in the report
Legal Implications:	The Council is under a duty to set a budget which prevents a debit balance arising on the Housing Revenue Account
Service Improvement Plan Implications:	n/a
Corporate Plan:	n/a
Risk Assessment:	As set out in the report (section 5)
Background Papers:	Draft Budget Book and Fees and Charges
Appendices/Enclosures:	n/a
Report Author/Lead Officer:	Tim Hoskins and Julian Bowcher